

WABASH RIVER HERITAGE CORRIDOR COMMISSION
Meeting Minutes – January 12, 2005
Indiana Government Center South, Conference Center Rooms 4 & 5
Indianapolis, Indiana

Voting members present:

Allen County-Paul McAfee
Cass County-Mercedes Brugh
DNR-Steve Morris
Huntington County-Mike Mettler
Miami County-Ken Einselen
Posey County-Tom Straw
Sullivan County-John Gettinger
Tippecanoe-Norman (Lucky) Neiburger
Vigo County-Keith Ruble
Wabash County-Ernie Passwater
Warren County-Louise Jewell

Proxies:

Wells County-Mike Mettler
Jay County-John Gettinger
Adams County-John Gettinger

Others present:

Angela Hughes-Nature Conservancy
Sara Beanblossom-WFYI
Gary Harrison-WFYI
Don Jewell

Voting member absent w/o proxy:

Carroll County
Fountain County
Gibson County
Knox County
Parke County
Vermillion County

Nonvoting Members present:

Martha Clark-Mettler-IDEM
Timothy Kroeker-IDEM

Nonvoting Members not present:

INDOT
DNR-DHPA
Dept. of Commerce-Tourism

Commission and DNR staff present:

Ron James-WRHCC Exec. Director
Cynthia Webb-DNR Outdoor Recreation
Dale Brier-DNR Outdoor Recreation

CALL TO ORDER AND INTRODUCTIONS

Meeting called to order at 1:05 pm. by John G. Introductions; proxy tally; quorum present.

GUEST SPEAKERS

Angela Hughes, Indiana Nature Conservancy, relayed news of the new Indiana Conservation Alliance (INCA) and their first "Conservation Day," 02/01/05. INCA is advocating for the Indiana Heritage Trust, Clean Water Indiana, and Farmland Preservation.

Gary Harrison & Sara Beanblossom, WFYI, stated that a 3-5 minute video project fundraising piece will be ready soon. WFYI will use the Commission member page on our website as a contact list for sending out camera crews. A Proposal detail for the video project was passed out.

ADDITIONS TO AGENDA

John G. opened the agenda. Added were 1) review of the vision and mission statement; 2) Dan McCain's request for action regarding a Corridor Fund project; 3) a DNR request re: the Comprehensive Wildlife Conservation Strategy Survey; 4) WRHCC participation at Conservation Day; and, 5) a Midwest Invasive Plants Network request for a possible partner organization list.

REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF NOVEMBER 10, 2004 MEETING MINUTES

With the spelling of “Rep. Borders” name, Mercedes B. moved to approve the minutes as corrected. Ken E. second. Passed.

PRESIDENT’S REPORT – (John G. disseminated his report on 1/12/05)

John G. passed out a flyer for the Wabash River Heritage Paddlefest, August 6-7, 2005, a canoe paddle from Grayville, Illinois to New Harmony. Tom S. credited Sherrell Marginet, former WRHCC representative for Gibson County, as a driving force. Hopes are for five hundred canoes for this event. John G. also spoke of visits to Fairbanks Park and Vincennes’ Kimmel Park.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR’S REPORT - (mailed with 1/12/05 agenda)

Ron J. discussed the Terre Haute Chamber of Commerce’s Water Alliance Committee plan to build a lateral park to the west of downtown with 600 acres of wetlands and trails. Rod Henry, head of the T.H. Chamber, will be our contact.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Finance Report – see attached

Steve Morris passed out the finance report, noting the format is the same as for the past several months. A little over \$31,000 remains for operating expenses until the end of June. Immediate future expenses include: 3 months office utilities, \$150; replacement laptop computer and new LCD projector, approximately \$3000; and, phone bill at \$100.05. The funds to pay our Executive Director through October 30, 2005, were successfully encumbered, meaning they will not revert on July 1. Expected expenses to the fiscal year end were discussed. Since there are less than 10 copies left of the Corridor Master Plan, Louise J. moved to have 100, with color covers but B&W interiors, printed. Mike M. second. Passed.

Steve M. noted the finance report reflects funds left under Susan Benner’s contract. Though encumbered last year, those funds will revert at the end of this fiscal year. Lucky N. asked if there was a way to use these funds. Steve has asked and been told “No,” only for the encumbered use. Further discussion concerned the Commission Fund statute’s “non-reversion” provision; what might need done to get that honored; the notice of termination clause in the Exec. Dir. Contract and its “sub-contract” provision.

Keith R. made a motion to accept the financial report. Tom S. seconded. Motion passed.

Legislative Report

Mercedes B. has held off giving Senator Weatherwax our report on our legislator contacts. Ron J. will update the report next week after getting more results from Commissioners. Steve M. inquired of the claim payment procedure modification legislation (proposed last year); the subject of his earlier, unanswered, emails. Mercedes B. agreed to get it to the Legislature upon Steve’s re-send of the email.

Water Trail Report

Mike M. displayed an example of the water trail sign, final except for the website address at the bottom. Ron J. relayed Illinois’ approval but reservation as to the use of an “IN.gov” website. The State of Illinois owns no access sites on the Wabash – all are local, park-owned properties. Dave Longo, our Illinois DNR contact, will see what funds may be available in their next budget to help pay for bridge & access signs. Mike M. noted the “Community” sign quotes received from PEN products (\$56 per B&W sign; \$230 for 5 colors). These were 36” round signs – not completely comparable. A discussion on the size of bridge signage ensued. Dale B. stated a minimum size for the bridges should be 3 ft x 4 ft. These may cost well over \$100 each. It was

proposed the Commission count the access sites, add a number for vandalism, theft and new sites, and print the signs. \$15,000 was noted as our budget for water trail. Lucky N. moved the water trail committee decide how many, and what size, signs, and order within budget. Mercedes B. second. Passed.

Mike M., Dale B. and Ron J. will be meeting with a student of Bernie Dahl's at Purdue. It is hoped that using a student will minimize the cost of our initial Water Trail map segments for the trail brochures.

Wabash Video Report

See above under Guest Speakers. A discussion ensued of a source to pay for pre-production costs.

Education Report

John G. has shared past Teach the River curriculum with, and is sending a copy of the 4-H Discover the River project book to, Pam Luenz (a BOW board member) of Lafayette. She has agreed to host a continuing education seminar at the Canal Interpretive Center in Delphi this summer.

Newsletter Report

The deadline for *L'Esprit de Ouabache* newsletter articles is February 28. It was decided to skip an issue of *Wabash Reflections* to focus on these print articles. Ron J. estimates circulation at 1,000 copies. Ron asked if members had any difficulty with January's *Wabash Reflections* due to added graphics.

Nomination Report

On behalf of the nominating committee, Louise J., nominated John Gettinger as president and Lucky Neiburger as vice-president for 2005. There being no nominations from the floor, Louise J. moved nominations be closed and a unanimous vote cast. Keith R. second. Motion passed.

OLD BUSINESS

Banks of Wabash expansion to corridor wide focus

Ron J. and John G. attended the December Banks of the Wabash (BOW) meeting and will frame new bylaws to facilitate BOW covering the entire corridor. BOW will see the changes at their meeting 2/16.

WRHC Brochure Reprint Cost Report

We have about 20,000 2nd edition brochures left. The company that printed this edition is quoting \$15,218 /100,000 and \$23,161 /150,000, including 7 hours of art work; \$62.50/hour thereafter.

2005 Meeting Locations

Commission meetings (second Wednesday) in March at the Indiana Govt. Center in Indianapolis; May at Logansport; July at Bluffton; September in Vigo County; and, November back to the IGC, Indianapolis.

Legislative Follow-up

It was decided that any Commission member that is able should meet with legislators at the Conservation Day on Feb. 1st. Member Tracy Newberry wrote the Governor in support of the commission and corridor funding. Copies of the letter were made available to commission members.

NEW BUSINESS

Letters Sent and Received – (mailed with 1/12/05 agenda)

1) A letter was sent to the Rivers Institute at Hanover College requesting a meeting with their Executive Director to discuss possible collaboration. It was a follow-up to an earlier contact; a reminder. 2) Steve M. reported the Miami County Commissioners have appointed an alternate commissioner-C. Craig Boyer.

Other Items

John G. passed out copies of the mission and vision statement for review & consideration.

Dan McCain, of the Delphi Canal Museum and Interpretive Center, emailed that their project's WRHC approved grant was \$37.5K less than what was requested. Mr. McCain is asking for any unused/returned grant dollars the Commission or DNR might have been made available to help cover their proposed canal boat re-creation. Discussion ensued concerning any funds available. Lucky N. moved we send a letter of endorsement, with regrets as no funds are available. Ken E. second. Tom S. proposed to add that it could be considered at a future grant round. Amendment accepted by movant and second. Passed.

Consideration was given the two survey requests by divisions of DNR. Steve M. recommended that the Commission complete both the Comprehensive Wildlife Conservation Strategy Survey and the Midwest Invasive Plant Network survey. Ron J. directed to complete both surveys for the Commission.

Ron J. noted \$15 "table rent" to display at Conservation Day. Keith R. moved, Tom S. second. Passed.

Lucky N. moved \$50.00 for Indiana Legislative Directories for all members. Keith R. second. Passed.

Steve M. reported that Keith Huffman requests support for a Transportation Enhancement (TE) application that Wells County is submitting to move a historic bridge from Vera Cruz to Bluffton and restore it for use as a pedestrian bridge over the Wabash River. Mike M. made a motion for a letter of support for the Wells County TE application. Ken E. seconded the motion. Motion passed.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

John G. announced meetings of 1) Wabash Paddlefest committee on Feb. 2 at New Harmony; 2) BOW Board of Directors, February 16th at the W. Lafayette Library; and, 3) Commission executive committee on March 9th, 11 a.m., to review the Executive Director's work progress. The Paddlefest, itself, takes place August 6th and 7th.

Ron J. stated the Terre Haute Water Alliance meets normally at 7:30 a.m. on the third Monday of each month but that there were scheduling difficulties such that he did not know the next date.

GENERAL DISCUSSION

Comments by Commission Alternates

Keith R. commented that a non-active group, the Wabash Valley Association, still had a treasury of possibly \$50,000. A discussion, of pursuing a donation and by whom, ensued. Steve M. is to contact DNR's Division of Accounting to see if funds, other than state money, donated to the WRHCC, must be handled/spent according to state spending guidelines. John G. will contact Don Fultz, the last president of the Wabash Valley Association, and see if they are amicable to being a sponsor of, or helping to sponsor, one of the Commission's projects.

Comment by Visitors

Don Jewell commended the manner Louise J. handled a trying meeting with Senator Joe Harrison.

Final Comments by Commission Members

Tom S. said that WFYI was going to send a photographer out to take video coverage of the ongoing Wabash River flooding in Posey County.

John Gettinger reminded commission members to join him at Conservation Day on February 1st.

Next Meeting-March 9, 2005, Indianapolis-Indiana Government Center South, Conference Center Rooms 4 & 5.

Meeting adjourned at 3:50.